

MONDAY, MAY 24

The morning was cold and cloudy in the pioneer camp and a north breeze was blowing, the cold being sufficient to freeze clothing stiff when laid on the ground to dry. Brother Fairbanks, who was bitten by a rattlesnake the day before, was a little easier, but his leg was considerably swollen.

Orson Pratt made an observation and found that this camp was 3370 feet above sea level.

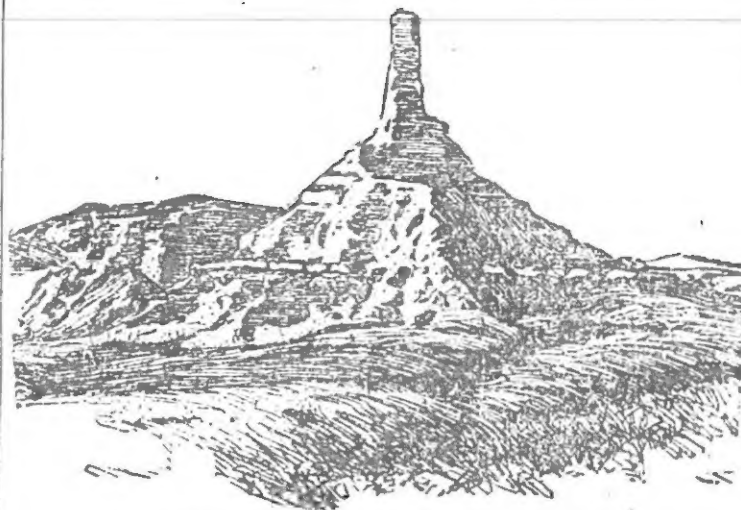
About 8 a. m. the pioneers took leave of this interesting region and traveled over a somewhat sandy, though level, prairie about ten miles, taking almost a straight course toward Chimney Rock. A noon halt was made at 12:45 p. m. near the river to feed the animals. At this point the bluffs on the north were about two miles from the camp and one mile from the river.

About noon the weather began to moderate and grow warmer and about 3 p. m. the journey was continued, the pioneers pursuing a straight course toward Chimney Rock over a level road.

On approaching the river they saw a band of Sioux Indians riding on the gallop in the direction of the pioneer company, but on the opposite side of the river. Seeing them, the pioneers sent a messenger ahead to instruct the forward teams to halt and commenced forming a circle for defense about a quarter of a mile from the river.

At 5:45 p. m. the camp was nearly formed, but could not be completed until about half an hour later, in consequence of John Pack, Horace K. Whitney and others having loitered behind with their teams. The distance traveled in the afternoon was six and a half miles and during the day 16½ miles. Several of the horse teams gave out during the day's travel, but the oxen were gaining in strength daily. The mules stood the journey well and this might be said of all the teams, considering the scarcity of grass.

When the Indians approached Wilford Woodruff was riding about two miles ahead of the company to find a camping place, and on his return he saw about 30 Sioux Indians plunge their horses into the river on the south side and come toward him. Together with several others, Brother Woodruff rode to the river and met



CHIMNEY ROCK ON THE PLATTE  
(After the early sketches made of the famous landmark.)

them as they came out. The Indians shook hands with the brethren in a very friendly manner. The chief unfurled a large flag and presented a letter written in French to Elder Woodruff.

After making their encampment the brethren in camp discovered that the Indians on the south bank of the river were flying a white flag, which was their mode of finding out if they would be admitted into the pioneer camp. President Young proposed that a man be sent up the river with a white flag to meet them. Colonel Albert P. Rockwood and Henry G. Sherwood went and when the Indians saw this white flag, emblematic of peace, they commenced to cross the river, some of them singing, and after they had placed their flag on the ground the brethren placed their flag by the side of it and began to make inquiries as to the intentions of the Indians, who by this time had crossed the river on their ponies to the number of about 35 men, women and children. The chief then showed two letters of recommendation written in French. One was addressed to "Owashtecha, ou belle journeye" and signed by "P. D. Papau." The other was to "Our Brave" or "Brave Bear" and signed at Fort John, December 24, 1846. The chief, "Owashtecha," had a large medal hung

around his neck with "Pierre Chateau Jun. & Co." inscribed on one side and "Upper Mission Outfit," with the bust of a man in the center. On the reverse side was engraved "Peace and Friendship." "Brave Bear" had in his hand a flag bearing the stripes and eagle with "E. Pluribus Unum," but there were no stars on the Indian banner, which is emblematic of America encouraging the Indians, but giving no stars of glory to the sons of the prairie.

It was soon ascertained that the object of their visit was to obtain something to eat and they also wanted to visit the camp. Five of them were conducted around the camp by Colonel Markham and Rockwood. They were shown a six and 15-shooter and also the cannon; the gunners went through the evolutions a number of times, which seemed to please the Indians much. These natives were all well dressed and very noble looking, some having good, clean blankets and other nice robes, artistically ornamented with beads and painting. All had many ornaments on their clothing and in their ears. Some had painted shells suspended from the ears. All appeared to be well armed with muskets. Their moccasins were clean and beautifully made and one of them had a pair of moccasins of clear white, ornamented with beads,

etc., and they all fitted very tight to the foot. William Clayton says that as to cleanliness and neatness these Indians would vie with the most tasteful whites. The brethren contributed something to eat, which was sent to their camp. Some tobacco was also given to them.

After the five who were visiting the pioneer camp had smoked the pipe of peace the chiefs were treated to supper in camp and after they had viewed the camp they returned to their horses and the rest of the party, which had camped on the river about a quarter of a mile west of the pioneer camp. The chief and his squaw signified a wish to abide with the pioneers over night. The brethren fixed up a tent for them to sleep under. Porter Rockwell made them some coffee and they were also furnished with some victuals. The old chief amused himself by looking at the moon through a telescope for about 20 minutes.

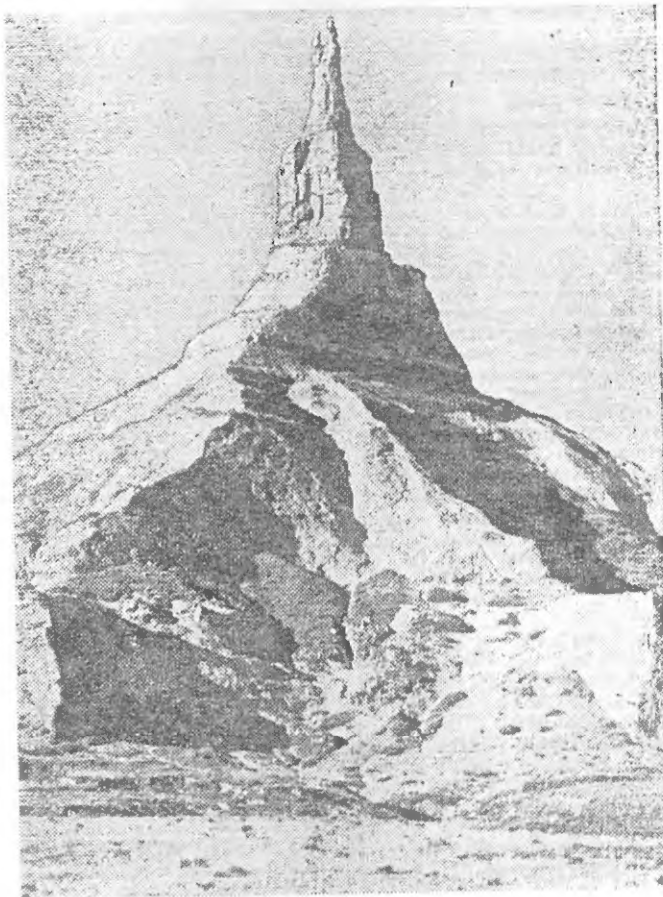
Opposite the camp, on the south side of the river, the pioneers could see a very large rock which resembled a castle four stories high, but in a state of ruins. The scenery around was altogether pleasant and romantic. The evening was very fine, but cool.

The horses were left out to feed until 11 p. m., with a guard to watch them.

The camp on Monday night afforded a full view of Chimney Rock, which was only a few miles westward. Captain Stansbury describes it as a singular formation that had at one time been a portion of the main chain of bluffs bounding the valley of the Platte and had been separated from it by the action of the water. It consisted of a conical elevation about 100 feet high and from its apex arose a shaft about 40 feet high, the whole being caused by disintegration of the softer portions of the bluffs.

It was the most famous landmark of the old overland journey and when reaching it the weary pioneer knew that nearly one-half the journey had been consumed between the Missouri river and the Salt Lake valley. Situated as it was, it could be easily seen for miles on either side of it, which added to its value as a landmark and guide to western immigration.

Chimney Rock is situated on the south side of the Platte, not far from the boundary line of Nebraska and Wyoming.



CHIMNEY ROCK—This picturesque formation along the Platte River is visible for miles around on the plains of western Nebraska. It was a Pioneer landmark.

...and the ...  
...over a large ...  
...mile from ...  
...began ...  
...of stone to ...  
...which ...  
...traveling ...  
...of a ...  
...to the ...  
...with a ...  
...a great ...  
...water ...  
...and ...  
...mostly in a ...  
...around the b



Copyright 1957 by Glenn E. Nielson, Trustee-in-trust for the Cody Ward Mural Trust. Used by permission.  
Crossing the Plains, from mural painting by Edward T. Grigware